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Charlotte Daigle to Mr. Meredith (6 October 1962)

Charlotte Daigle

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Oct. 6, 1962

answered 1/16/63
Dear Mr. Meredith:

I wish to congratulate you on achieving a major breakthrough in the name of freedom for the South and for the United States. Perhaps you began your mission simply for the purpose of furthering your education, but you have emerged a courageous and heroic man.

May I express my sincere sympathy for your loneliness and the profound feelings of isolation which you must be experiencing. As a former Southerner, my heart cries out for those countrymen who have treated you so badly. They are not to be blamed, as you probably realize, for the hatred and antagonism which are their birthrights.

Complete integration in the moral sense as well as the technical sense will come, but slowly . . . so slowly and painfully that children yet unborn are destined to be hurt in the process. Men like yourself, however, are securing for these children a more promising

future than the Negroes of your generation now have.

I hope you will not become too discouraged by the insults and ill feelings of your classmates. Few men could stand by their rights under such unfavorable circumstances. But whatever happens, you must remember that there are thousands of persons behind you who have confidence and faith in your actions.

As a student of psychology at San Francisco State College and a former Southerner, I am interested in the "whys" of the recent situation in your town. I want to better understand, as I'm sure you do yourself, what motivates people such as my old friends in Louisiana as well as Hitler's Nazis to vent their hatred on certain groups of people. I never believed that the same persons with whom I lived and grew up could be capable of such violence until I read of the recent

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riots in New Orleans. There are explanations for this behavior, but reasons are so often ignored when immediate action is needed.

I know you will be busy with your studies, but if you could see your way clear to write an occasional letter to me, it would be deeply appreciated. Incidences such as the one at your school are forgotten by the newspapers soon after the riots cease. Little Rock is past history and like occurrences appear to be smoothed over to the public eye when there is no more apparent trouble. But feelings and attitudes are not so easily changed, and the fact that you have been accepted to the University does not mean that you will be accepted in the University.

I am very interested in what happens in your day-to-day living experience. Will people come around to accepting; will

their attitudes lose some of the bitterness which has exploded in the past two weeks? Or will the situation erupt again and again, until you are forced out of the area by the desire which every man has for a happy environment?

I want to understand the situation as best I can, for I someday will be dealing directly with the prejudices and hatreds of human beings, and attempting to find the reasons behind them.

If you are too busy, or for some other reason, do not wish to correspond, then I will certainly understand. If you do, however, I would feel very honored and pleased to hear of any observations, insights, or feelings which you have concerning your situation.

In closing, may I wish you and your family happiness in

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your personal lives. Best of
luck with your education!

Sincerely,

Charlotte Daigle

Charlotte Daigle

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